



# STILL SERVING

Published by the Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB, D.C.

October 2005

## SECRETARY ROCHE HEADS RETIREE DAY PROGRAM



Former Secretary of the Air Force James G. Roche headlines the program for Retiree Appreciation Day at Bolling AFB, Saturday, November 19. From 2001 through January 2005, Dr. Roche's responsibilities included organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of some 370,000 men and women on active duty, 180,000 members of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 160,000 civilians and their families. A retired Navy captain with 23 years' active duty, Roche commanded the USS Buchanan, a guided missile destroyer. He received the Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy, awarded to the commander of the most improved combat unit in the Pacific. His other awards include the Order of the Sword, presented by Air Force NCOs. He is only the ninth Air Force-level inductee and the second secretary to be inducted into the Royal Order of the Sword since the ceremony was updated in 1967. Its origin dates to 1522. Col. (Ret.) John Moser, director of Bolling's Retiree Activities Office, said he was elated that Dr. Roche had accepted his invitation to speak at the annual salute to Air Force retirees at The Clubs. Presentations in the ballroom begin at 9 a.m. Two buffet lunch options will be available over the noon hour. A full buffet is priced at \$6 and soup and salad at \$4. The five-hour ballroom program will be preceded by health screenings in the Potomac South room — including influenza immunizations — from 7 to 9:15 a.m. Lab tests have been expanded to include PSA, lipid panel, thyroid function,

glucose and anemia. Attendees may select one or all of the offerings. Since many of the tests require fasting, arrival is suggested before partaking in breakfast. Vehicle registration will be available in the front lobby from 8 to 9:30 a.m. and identification card renewals from 2-4 p.m. on the second floor of the Maisey Building. Other presentations will include an update on Capitol Hill activities pertaining to military retirees; Tricare services for the under-65 retiree; and growing concerns over personal ID theft. Bolling's exchange and commissary stores plan daylong sales promotions aimed at retirees, their major source of patronage.

## BRAC SELECTIONS AWAIT FINAL APPROVAL

The Defense Department recommended closing 33 major bases and realigning 29 others as part of a comprehensive reshaping of the military infrastructure through the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process. The recommendations went to the BRAC Commission chaired by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony J. Principi. It added about a dozen facilities for consideration. If adopted, the recommendations would give DoD a net savings of almost \$50 billion over 20 years, officials said. Annual savings are pegged at \$5.5 billion a year after that. By September 23, the president was to have accepted or rejected the commission recommendations. Congress then has 45 days to accept or reject the White House recommendations in their entirety. The commission rejected closing Ellsworth AFB, S.D. and voted to keep Cannon AFB, N. M., open until at least 2009. It voted to close Onizuka AFB, Calif.; Brooks City Base, Tex.; and operations at Galena Airport, Alaska. Realignment was recommended at Pope AFB N.C.; Eielson AFB, Alaska; Maxwell AFB, Ala.; Lackland and Sheppard AFBs, Tex.; and McGuire AFB, N.J. The commission recommended closing Forts Gillem and McPherson in Atlanta; Fort Monroe, Va.; Fort Monmouth, N.J.; and the Army Garrison in Selfridge, Mich. Also, realignments at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.; Fort Knox, Ky.; and Fort Eustis, Va. It agreed to close almost 400 Army Reserve and National Guard facilities, in favor of joint centers in their place. Major Navy bases closed were Pascagoula NAS, Miss.; Brunswick NAS, Maine; Atlanta NAS; and Naval Station Ingleside and NAS Corpus Christi in Texas. Also, realignments at Oceana NAS, Va.; Great Lakes NS, Ill.; and San Diego NS. DoD agencies in leased spaces throughout the National Capital Area and Defense Finance and Accounting Service offices in Cleveland, Indianapolis and in Arlington, Va., also face major realignment actions. Some 40 DoD installations could gain more than 400 personnel. Air Force gainers would include Little Rock AFB, Ark.; Peterson AFB, Colo.; Scott AFB, Ill.; Andrews AFB, Md.; and Shaw AFB, S.C. Other major gainers in the National Capital Area would be Fort Belvoir, Va., and the Marine Corps Logistics Base at Quantico, Va.

## BUDGET CONCERNS DOMINATE COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS

Budget concerns — the bane of each and every element of Defense Department operations — made its presence known at the 32nd annual meeting of the Air Force Retiree Council at Randolph AFB, Tex., in June. The 20-person council is co-chaired by Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Don Peterson and CMSAF (Ret.) Jim Finch. They work directly with the Chief of Staff in providing liaison with the retiree community. The council's Area XII representative (Andrews, Bolling and Dover AFBs) is CMSgt. (Ret.) Chuck Lucas, Springfield, Va. He can be reached at Bolling AFB (202) 767-5244. The co-chairs advised the Chief of Staff that the council had reviewed 35 issues submitted from the field. Many were forwarded to appropriate Air Staff offices or outside agencies for their information and/or action. Funding — or the lack thereof — reared its head in almost every presentation to the council, representing more than 700,000 Air Force retirees. Buzz words like "shared services," "cost of benefits," "offsets," "delayed effective dates," "shortfalls," "smaller footprint," and "tight budgets" dominated discussions. "The active force is being called on to do more with less and we have to expect similar belt tightening," said General Peterson. "We're operating on a wartime budget." With budgetary deficits, fiscal constraints and gains made last year in retiree benefits, attention this year focused on "fairness issues," i.e., seeking elimination of reduction in SBP where DIC is also

awarded, change date of paid up SBP and clean up some CRSC issues. Issues of identity theft, including use of Social Security numbers, and issuance of ID cards to dependents and the aged or handicapped were reviewed. Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, DCS Personnel, said active-duty strength would hover around 360,000 at the end of the year. This will result in further challenges in delivering Personnel services. Face-to-face contact with Personnel specialists will dip to about 5 percent, he said. Some retirees are more ready for "state-of-the-art" than others. "Old paradigms are hard to break." Services reported continued retiree participation in lodging, clubs, fitness centers, libraries, golf courses and aero clubs. Club operations — once a primary social center on many military bases — remain a dying breed. There are 116 Air Force clubs — 77 of them "co-located" — and most are in the red despite more than 50 percent patronage by retirees. Use of dining facilities by retirees continues at the discretion of the local commander. Another retiree favorite is the library system, which reported circulation of 10.8 million publications from 109 libraries last year. CMSgt. (Ret.) Bobby Roberts, Spangdahlem AB, Germany, completed his four-year term on the council, representing the Atlantic Region. He was succeeded by CMSgt. (Ret.) David Killman, Ramstein AB, Germany. Col. (Ret.) Frank Rohrbough, Boerne, Tex., was named a Member at Large, focusing on legislative issues.

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Colonel Moser

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. (Ret.) John Moser, Director, Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB, D.C.

The arrival of fall is most welcome after an abominable summer. As we regain our normal routines, I would ask that you include the Retiree Team at Bolling AFB on your agenda. Our annual Dental Saturday was yet another successful example of a team effort involving Bolling's active force with its retiree volunteers. Coordination with the 11<sup>th</sup> Medical Group and the Dental Squadron began in late spring. Then Squadron Commander Col Grant Hartup committed his staff to work on Saturday, July 23, normally an "off" day. On the "call-in day," July 15, SSgts. Juana Marin-Dominguez and Fallon Costigan manned the phones for more than two hours. Very patiently, they handled a barrage of (sometimes feisty) incoming calls, determining eligibility and setting up more than 50 appointments. On July 22, selected retirees received a reminder-call to assure attendance the next day (only one was a "no show"). It was a smooth operation and, from my vantage point, it was the best executed Dental Saturday in its 11-year history. I want to thank the commander of the Medical Group, Col. Brenda McEleney, her most capable associates — Col Erik Meyers (Residency Chief) and Col. Barbara King (new dental squadron CO) and, most importantly, all members of the dental squadron, for making this

event not only possible, but also extremely successful. The Air Force family does care!!! Other news: Col. Duane Jones (Commander, AF District of Washington) should be on the next list submitted to the Senate for promotion to BG. He'll be on the Retiree Appreciation Day program, November 19. Also, the 11<sup>th</sup> Medical Group is again going all out for its retiree colleagues. Health screenings from 7 to 9:15 a.m. have been expanded to include a variety of lab tests, some of which require overnight fasting. Former Sec AF Dr. James Roche is the featured speaker on the ballroom program. Put November 19 on your MUST calendar. As you can see the retiree program at Bolling AFB continues to be an active part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Wing team. But, our rolls are shrinking. Our responsibilities are growing and WE NEED HELP. Although constantly recruiting I am completely dependent on your volunteerism. Call me — call the office — (202) 767-5244 — and let's talk. It is not difficult, it requires a minimal time investment and, more importantly, you are needed.

## COUNTDOWN FOR AIR FORCE MEMORIAL

By Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Edward F. Grillo Jr., President, Air Force Memorial Foundation

The Air Force Memorial groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for October 14, 2006. It's our responsibility to tell the world that America is ready to pay tribute to the men and women of the United States Air Force... a tribute that's 57 years (97 years counting our predecessor organizations) in the making... and 12 years overdue. The old Navy Annex Building #8 — nearest the Pentagon — is gone. Some 50,000 cubic yards of soil over the entire site has been removed to achieve the necessary grade for the memorial. Two dozen caissons have been built to support our memorial's three stainless steel spires, the tallest one being 270 feet. Our plan is to complete all three spires by February 2006, followed by an Administration Building in June. Not only must we invite our fellow Americans to join us in the celebration of our service, we must ask them to help take the final critical steps to groundbreaking. We need \$2.8 million to fully fund construction of our memorial. We remain convinced that we can raise the money, but only if each and every Air Force member — past and present — enlists a friend to make a tax-deductible gift to the Air Force Memorial Foundation. Help us generate support and excitement among Air Force friends and family. Help us to urge them to visit our Web site today ([www.airforcememorial.org](http://www.airforcememorial.org)) today. Help us to ask as many as possible to send the most generous contribution they can to the Air Force Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 97026, Washington DC 20077-7193. Together we'll stand on the promontory above the Pentagon beneath our memorial. Together, we'll revel in the satisfaction of knowing that we've built a fitting and noble touchstone of our service and sacrifice that will inspire future generations.



Model of Memorial Design

**RETIREE PAY IS TAXABLE** - Internal Revenue Service officials have asked the Defense Department to help ensure that DOD federal civilians receiving federal pay or retirement checks pay their federal income taxes. Most federal employees and retirees routinely pay their federal taxes, but some do not, according to IRS commissioner Mark Everson. An IRS analysis showed that last year the delinquency rate for civilian employees of federal agencies and departments was 3.8 percent. The rate for DOD federal employees was slightly higher, at 5 percent, up from 4.8 percent in 2003. Of all categories of federal employees, active-duty service members generally have the highest rate of tax compliance. However, the rate for military retirees is less stellar. Part of the problem could be that military retirees are not aware that their pensions are federally taxable. Another could be that there is no requirement that they automatically withhold federal taxes from their retirement pay. The IRS is conducting an outreach program to inform retired military employees about their tax responsibilities. In all instances, we have attempted to contact these individuals," Everson said. "Although many of them are attempting to resolve their tax problems, some are not." DOD civilian policy officials said stronger measures are possible. Employees who fail to pay their taxes can have their pay garnished, and outstanding tax debts can also affect their ability to obtain or maintain a security clearance.

*Still Serving* is published in February, June and October by the Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB DC, to provide retirees and family members information affecting the military retiree community. Content does not necessarily reflect official views, or is endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Air Force. Comments may be directed to the Bolling AFB Retiree Activities Office, 11<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Group/CVR, 110 Luke Avenue, Suite 302, Bolling AFB DC 20032. Phone (202) 767-5244; E-Mail [retact@bolling.af.mil](mailto:retact@bolling.af.mil); FAX (202) 404-5342. *Still Serving* may be downloaded from [www.bolling.af.mil/orgs/tenants/rao](http://www.bolling.af.mil/orgs/tenants/rao). Changes of address must be sent to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, P.O. Box 7130, London KY 40742-7130.



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## ENLISTED VILLAGE OPENS ASSISTED LIVING



CMSAF Binnicker

Hawthorn House, the Air Force Enlisted Village's assisted living residence, is accepting new residents. The 64-apartment complex, located on five acres of land on the Bob Hope Village campus in Shalimar, Fla., features all the amenities of a state-of-the-art facility. Its opening in August brought a 38-year dream to fruition -- lifetime care for the widows of retired Air Force enlisted members. "The need for such a facility increases each and every day," said retired CMSAF Jim Binnicker, president and chief executive officer. "It's the most critical missing piece to our whole plan. Many widows are forced to move to state-run nursing homes, assisted living facilities or move in with their children because they can't handle day-to-day living on their own," Binnicker said. "Having our own assisted living facility means our residents are able to simply move across the street rather than leave their friends and military family." An added benefit to opening the assisted living facility is that a number of apartments in Bob Hope Village and Teresa Village will be available as current residents move to Hawthorn House. "If you're a widow who isn't sure if she's ready to move to the Air Force Enlisted Village, now is the perfect time to reconsider," said Binnicker. "We're going to have lots of room available and we'll be able to support even more widows who may need our help." Enlisted widows of other branches of the military are eligible for residency on a

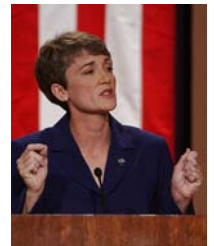
space-available basis. The following priority system is used to place individuals in Hawthorn House: Current residents of Teresa Village and Bob Hope Village; Prior residents of both villages; Those on the waiting list for independent living; New individuals. For more information, contact the Hawthorn House director of admissions at 1 800 258-1413.

**SBP OPEN SEASON UNDERWAY** - The open enrollment period for the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), which started October 1, will last one year. Non-enrolled retirees can elect to begin coverage, and those now enrolled at less than maximum coverage can elect to increase their coverage. The survivor annuity has been increased from 35 percent of SBP-covered retired pay to 40 percent, effective October 1. It will go up to 45 percent April 1; to 50 percent April 1, 2007; and to 55 percent of covered retired pay on April 1, 2008. Members may elect to cover any amount between \$300 and full retired pay. Those retired at least one year but less than two years must pay 48 times their initial premium. Members can elect to cover lower amounts of retired pay to reduce the initial enrollment fee, and the enrollment fee can be paid in 24 equal monthly installments. For members retired six years or more, the open enrollment fees represent the total of back premiums plus the compounded interest rate used for the military retirement fund (6.25% annually). Open season enrollees who balk at the fees should consider the increased value of the benefit to their survivors. The average survivor outlives the average retiree by 7 years, and many outlive the retired member by far longer. It only takes one year of a benefit that's 55 percent of retired pay to recoup the cost of 10 years of premium payments, considering that the survivor annuity will be increased for inflation long after the premiums were paid.

**RETIREES RECEIVE MONTHLY CRSC STATEMENTS** - The Defense and Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) provides electronic delivery of Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) account statements to military retirees. Statements are available on a monthly basis via the online pay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. They provide detailed information including disability ratings, unemployment and Purple Heart indicators. While retirees may continue to contact the Retired and Annuitant Contact Center by phone at 1 800 321-1080, the statement will answer most questions regarding the computation of CRSC payments. Details about retroactive payments will be available through myPay by the end of the year. The Web-based system delivers personal pay information and provides the ability to process pay-related transactions timely, safely and securely for all its members. The online system eliminates the risks associated with hard copy documents by allowing members to access their electronic 1099R, Retiree Account Statement and other financial information.

**DFAS STRESSES MYPAY FOR RETIREES** - The Defense Finance and Accounting Service has invited some 400,000 military retirees under age 65 to enroll in its myPay electronic system. A mass mailing focused on the benefits of myPay, which is designed to help customers better manage their retired pay account. Located online at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>, myPay is a web-based system that allows customers to make changes to their pay account via the Internet. Participants can view their account information via computer virtually 24 hours a day. It eliminates time spent on the phone waiting for the next available operator. DFAS officials emphasize that myPay provides customers with secure technology that meets or exceeds security standards in private industry. Some of the things you can complete online: Receive account and tax information. Retirees can get their 1099R about a month earlier on myPay; Misplace your 1099R? It's always available on myPay; Stop, change and start most allotments, including savings bond purchases; Update your e-mail and mailing address. myPay allows the customer to create a "restricted access" PIN. If the retired member is unable to retrieve pay or tax information due to travel or illness, a designated family member or representative can look at current data. This restricted access PIN prevents anyone else from adding, changing or deleting information in your pay account. First-time users will be asked to change the temporary PIN to a customized PIN. For more information, call 1 800-390-2348 or (216) 522-5122 from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**WILSON LONE WOMAN VETERAN IN CONGRESS** - The only woman veteran serving in the Congress also happens to be the first Air Force Academy graduate in the national body. Heather Wilson served seven years on active duty following graduation from the academy in 1982. She has represented New Mexico's First Congressional District since 1998. Wilson was a Rhodes Scholar and earned her masters and doctoral degrees in international relations from Oxford University in England, where she later served as an Air Force officer. After leaving the Air Force in 1989, she became director for European Defense Policy and Arms Control on the National Security Council staff at the White House. Of the current 435 members of the House, 108 served in uniform. Of 100 U.S. senators, 32 have military experience. The overall average for veterans is 26 percent, down 3 percent from last year and a whopping 44.6 percent since 1975.



Rep. Wilson

**BWI USO BIGGER AND BETTER** - The United Service Organizations International Gateway Lounge at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport is in its sixth year of operation. Countless USO volunteers have helped make the lounge a showplace for military families passing through the busy terminal. Corporate sponsors have played a major role in its successful operation. The Pentagon Federal Credit Union offers a no-fee automated teller machine. There is a computer room with free Internet access, thanks to Microsoft, and there are 15 mobile phones donated by MCI with free airtime for service members to call home. The lounge is located in the baggage claims area at the entrance of the international wing. Other amenities include a TV lounge; a comfortable sleeping room; food service; baggage storage; and rest rooms with changing tables and a nursery outfitted with cribs, highchairs and toys. Volunteers provide flight and travel arrangement information and assist travelers with finding their way through the airport and into Baltimore or Washington. Each year, as many as 250,000 military personnel and family members use the lounge, more than any other USO facility.

# WHERE THE TROOPS ARE, AN EXCHANGE FOLLOWS

During its 109-year history, AAFES' mission has been to follow service members no matter where they go - even if that means working in harm's way. The War Department issued General Order 46 in 1895 that directed commanders to establish exchanges at every post as practicable. Some of the first employees sold goods from tents. After the Army Exchange Service supported World War I and World War II, it was redesignated the Army and Air Force Exchange Service in 1948. The challenge remains of getting merchandise to remote areas. AAFES lost \$6 million in a six-month period, primarily because of convoy ambushes and hijackings. Despite the danger, employees continue to occasionally convoy to remote outposts to organize "rodeos" where employees sell merchandise off truck tailgates and from the back of aircraft so that troops can at least buy the essentials - like toiletries, socks and underwear. Base and post exchanges in-theater carry everything from DVD players to laptop computers. Commercial cargo planes fly in magazines, CDs and DVDs so patrons can buy the same merchandise as their counterparts in the United States - not outdated material. In stateside



shopettes, base exchanges and gas stations, store employees don't get the chance to interact with customers on a personal level. In Iraq and Afghanistan, many AAFES volunteers say that barrier crumbles to nothing. They know their patrons - their names, the names of their family members, their likes and dislikes.

**PRICE CHALLENGE AMOUNT RAISED** - The Army & Air Force Exchange Service has raised its limit on verbal price challenges from \$5 to \$10. "AAFES always aims to offer the lowest price," said AAFES Vice President of Store Operations, Phil Holifield. "Unfortunately, as much as we try, AAFES sometimes may not have the lowest price. When this happens we want to make the price challenge as easy as possible. Raising the verbal limit empowers AAFES cashiers and sales associates to immediately approve the price reduction." If a customer finds a lower price (AAFES locations will accept the customer's word) and charge the lower price up to a difference of \$10. "The bottom line is that we want authorized exchange customers to buy products at AAFES. Increasing the price challenge is just another way AAFES is combining outstanding customer service with great prices," Holifield said.

**AAFES DIVIDENDS BENEFIT MWR PROGRAMS** - The military services' Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs received \$242.3 million in 2004 from the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES). This dividend represents an average per capita dividend of \$277 for every service member, a 5 percent increase over last year. In 2003, AAFES paid a per capita dividend of \$264. The AAFES dividends have helped complete hundreds of community enhancement projects at Army and Air Force installations. Historically, about 67 percent of AAFES earnings are paid to MWR programs. In the past 10 years, more than \$2 billion has been contributed by AAFES to spend on quality of life improvements for soldiers, airmen and their families. Beneficiaries have included libraries, sports programs, swimming pools, hobby shops, music programs, youth activities and tickets and tour services. Because AAFES operates at some Marine and Navy locations, AAFES is able to return funds to Marines and sailors. The FY 2004 dividend of \$242.3 million was distributed as follows: Army, \$147.5 million; Air Force, \$82.3 million; Marines, \$11.9 million; Navy, \$6 million.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES PROVE POPULAR** - The American public is sending AAFES gift certificates to deployed troops in Southwest Asia in record numbers. More than 50,000 gift certificates have been purchased and sent to troops since the program began in 2003. Certificates may be purchased by anyone (even those not in the military). They can be used worldwide, including at 54 stores operated by AAFES in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most popular purchases include Monster Energy Drinks, global prepaid phone cards and Duracell batteries. Certificates can be purchased in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$15 and \$20 on [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com) or by calling 877-770-4438, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Certificates can be sent to individuals or distributed to "any service member." More than 18,000 gift certificates have been distributed through the American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society, USO, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and Fisher House.

**ANDREWS COMPLETES TWO-YEAR RENOVATION** - The Andrews AFB Commissary has completed a two-year, \$16.4 million renovation program that involved expansion in every department. Included was a Sushi Bar, Seafood Market and Grab and Go section. The sales floor was expanded by 10,000 square feet. The store features four self-checkout lanes, new display cases and the latest in décor and lighting. The 5 percent surcharge paid by store patrons covers the cost of modernizing existing commissaries and building new ones.

**AGENTS AUTHORIZED FOR COMMISSARY SHOPPING** - The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) permits authorized commissary patrons to have an agent assist or shop for them. This need has helped many deployed parents who have left their children in the care of family members. The directive also serves the needs of retired members. Agent authorization benefits those who need assistance shopping or who cannot shop because of disability, illness or infirmity. The installation commander through local pass and identification offices administers agent authorization.

**COMMISSARIES, TRICARE JOIN HANDS** - Fat. It's an epidemic among Americans and military families are no exception. The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) is partnering with Tricare in an effort to create greater awareness of nutrition and healthier eating through participation in Tricare's "Healthy Choices for Life" campaign. The campaign also addresses problems associated with alcohol and tobacco use.

"A focus on nutrition is one of the major trends in the grocery industry and we want to lead the way in making commissaries the place to shop for fresh, healthy foods," said Patrick B. Nixon, DeCA's chief executive officer. "In addition to great produce sections, we have organic and healthy food and wellness sections in many commissaries. These types of products will be increasing rapidly as more manufacturers get involved in the trend away from fad diets and more toward healthier eating. "Our commissaries will also sponsor tours that actually 'show and tell' military families what to look for on labels and the kinds of foods they should be eating for better health," said Nixon. "We're not trying to tell customers what they should or shouldn't buy when they shop their commissary, but we are saying 'it's your choice, make it healthy' and we're doing what we can to increase awareness. Just walking every single aisle of the commissary has some value," said Nixon. Coincidentally, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans from the Department of Agriculture stress eating well-balanced meals and exercising daily for good health and weight management. "Just remember though, exercise and fresh foods aren't the only things you can get at the commissary," Nixon said. "Military families will find 'financial fitness' by using their commissary benefit to purchase groceries at cost. It all adds up to overall average savings of 30 percent or more over commercial stores."

# SHORT SERVINGS

**COLA Figures This Month** – The amount of the 2006 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for federal retirees will be announced this month. With August and September still to be tabulated, the figure was 3.2 percent. It could become the largest increase since 3.5 percent in 2001. The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the Consumer Price Index to determine the annual COLA. This year's COLA was 2.7. Changes will be reflected in January checks for those receiving military retired pay, VA disability compensation, survivor annuities and Social Security payments.



Colonel Jones

**AFDW ON the Job** - The Air Force District of Washington, reactivated provisionally in January, assumed full operational capability at Bolling AFB, D.C. in July. It was first established in 1985 in response to post-Cold War reduction in forces and was inactivated in 1994. It serves as the single Air Force voice in the national capital region for base-operating support, major command-level functions, ceremonial and musical requirements, contingencies and consequence management. Because of broader command responsibility, one combined staff serves both AFDW and the 11th Wing, including the commander, Col. Duane Jones.

**Permanent ID Cards Available** – Permanent ID cards will be issued to military retiree spouses and survivors age 75 and older. Beneficiaries need not apply until their existing card is within 90 days of expiration. Beneficiaries will continue to receive health-care benefits, and their claims will be processed with their current ID card as long as their information is current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

**Andrews Retiree Day November 5** – Col. John Pray, 89th Airlift Wing commander, will be the keynote speaker at the Andrews AFB Retiree Appreciation Day, Saturday November 5, at The Club. Health screenings, from 7 to 9:30 a.m., will precede informational briefings in the ballroom.

**New Wing at Mildenhall** - U.S. Air Forces in Europe activated a new wing at RAF Mildenhall, England, enhancing the command's ability to provide support to geographically separated units in the United Kingdom. Airmen of the 501st Combat Support Wing focus on units separated from main operating bases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath. Previously, separated units in the United Kingdom at Fairford, Croughton, Alconbury, Molesworth and Menwith Hill, reported to the 38th CSW at Sembach Annex, Germany.

**Emergency Data Changed** - DOD has changed the Record of Emergency Data Form to require service members to designate exactly who should be declared the "person authorized to direct disposition" of remains. The change grew out of two fatalities in Iraq. The men — both unmarried — had not designated a person to direct disposition, and their parents were divorced. The older parent received the remains. Previously, service members could volunteer information on persons authorized to direct disposition of remains. This information now is mandatory.

**New Silver Dollar Honors Marine Corps** – A new commemorative coin, the 2005 Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Silver Dollar, is in circulation. It is the first time the United States has honored a branch of the military with a commemorative coin. The "heads" side features the flag raising at Iwo Jima; on the "tails" side, the Marine Corps eagle, globe and anchor emblem.

**LeMay House Dedicated** – Quarters 63 on Bolling AFB, the residence for vice chiefs of staffs of the Air Force, is now known as the LeMay House, honoring the memory of Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, fifth chief of staff of the Air Force. In 1959, he was the first vice chief to live in the house. He died in 1990.

**Airman Magazine Goes Quarterly** - Airman Magazine, the Air Force's monthly internal information source since 1957, is now distributed on a quarterly basis — October, January, April and July. Plus, the January almanac edition will be continued. Subscriptions are not affected. If you would like to receive the magazine, send your address to [afnspub@afnews.af.mil](mailto:afnspub@afnews.af.mil).

**General Keys Commands ACC** – Gen. Ronald E. Keys is the new commander of Air Combat Command, with headquarters at Langley AFB, Va. He also serves as the air component commander for U.S. Joint Forces Command and U.S. Northern Command. General Keys had been the deputy chief of staff for air and space operations at the Pentagon. He is a command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours, including more than 300 hours of combat time in Southeast Asia.

**VA-Walter Reed Join Forces** - VA Secretary R. James Nicholson and Walter Reed commander Army Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Farmer Jr., signed a memorandum of understanding for VA to offer vocational training and temporary jobs with VA in Washington. More than 800 veterans on medical hold at Walter Reed are potential beneficiaries. The VET IT program already has 35 alumni, 15 with full-time jobs at VA.

**Taps Near for Rhein-Main AB** - As Rhein-Main AB, Germany, nears its December 31 close date, travelers are cautioned on the loss of services. The Gateway Inn is closed. There is no space available lodging on base. Military members must make local hotel reservations and plan for additional transportation costs. Travelers may wish to contact surrounding military communities at Darmstadt, Wiesbaden, Spangdahlem and Ramstein for lodging assistance.



Redesigned Card

**New Club Cards** – The merger of Bank One with Chase Bank has resulted in the Air Force club membership card being redesigned. A "mass reissue" was to have been completed in September. The new cards offer the same membership benefits, rate and terms.

**Waiving Deductibles Illegal** - Uniformed Services beneficiaries who use Tricare Standard and Extra are responsible, under law, to pay annual deductibles and cost-shares associated with their care. The law prohibits health care providers from waiving Tricare beneficiary deductibles or cost-shares and requires providers to make reasonable efforts to collect these amounts. Health care providers who offer to waive deductibles and cost-shares or who advertise that they will do so may be investigated for program abuse and suspended or excluded as authorized providers.

**Alaska to Australia for C-17s** - Six C-17 Globemaster IIIs from McChord AFB, Wash., and Charleston AFB, S.C., flew from Alaska to Australia in an international exercise, involving more than 6,000 Australian and 10,000 U.S. service members. The C-17s delivered troops and supplies during a nighttime airdrop. The aircraft flew more than 7,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean, one of the longest C-17 direct delivery airdrops, refueling twice.

**Rosa Looks to The Citadel** – Lt. Gen. John Rosa has accepted the presidency of The Citadel military school in Charleston, S.C., pending his retirement from the Air Force. He has been superintendent of the Air Force Academy since 2003. He is a 1973 graduate of The Citadel.

**New Source for Point Credit Summary** - The Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver no longer mails point credit summaries to Air Force reservists. Since 1972, Guardsmen and reservists annually were mailed an Air Force Form 526, Air National Guard/Air Force Reserve Point Credit Summary. They now must use the virtual military personnel flight to print a copy of their point credit at [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/vs/).



General LeMay



# 'MOTOR POOL DRIVERS' PROVE HEROES IN IRAQ



USAF Photo by SSgt. Lindsey Maurice

**Air Force vehicle operators break down machine gun to ensure it is ready for next convoy delivering supplies throughout Iraq.**

The Army has traditionally provided protection for supply and munitions convoys in Iraq and Afghanistan, but when manning shortages made it tough for soldiers to fulfill that role, the Air Force provided help. As many as 25 percent of airmen in the vehicle operations career field were specially trained to assist in convoy operations in Southwest Asia. More than 4,000 Airmen make up the vehicle operations career field, including active duty, guardsmen and reservists. Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, two of those airmen have been killed while performing convoy operations in Iraq. Those airmen operate outside the traditional roles of their career field by providing security and support to convoys supporting the war on terrorism. Their primary mission is to escort and protect convoys through some of the most dangerous areas in Iraq. Airmen from the vehicle operations career field have driven more than 3.1 million miles, completed nearly 3,100 convoy missions and encountered more than 370 incidents such as ambushes, improvised explosive devices, and mortar and rocket-powered grenade attacks. Before participating in convoy operations, vehicle operations airmen receive training from soldiers at Fort Eustis, Va., and Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. "Initially, we had minimal

training in convoy operations," said MSgt. Dennis Ross, Bolling AFB, D.C. "But the training from the Army was very dedicated and hands-on. It included how to set up a convoy, the tactics, techniques and procedures associated with a convoy, and how to handle different threats and different enemy contacts." The soldiers also taught airmen how to handle weapons that many had never seen before. SrA Joshua Powell, Eielson AFB, Alaska, was attacked as his convoy arrived in Fallujah. "We were in that firefight for 10 to 15 minutes. With Airman Powell and others manning the guns, the convoy was able to leave the city and continue its mission. "There is more adrenaline running through your body than you can ever imagine, knowing you have got this gun and there are probably 80 people in the convoy that rely on your support," he said. SSgt. Amelia Solomon, RAF Mildenhall, England, also provided support to the convoy as a driver and as a dispatcher of about 1,240 gun trucks for more than 320 tactical convoys. She also contributed to the movement of more than 86 million pounds of cargo through more than 50,000 miles of hostile territory. On one of those trips, the road was blocked. "We got hit. An improvised explosive device went off a couple of trucks ahead. My truck ended up rear-ending a fuel tanker, and my head shattered the windshield." Sergeant Solomon also dislocated both knees and was eventually taken to Germany for treatment. She received a Purple Heart for her injuries and returned to Iraq to complete her tour. SrA John Chege, Langley AFB, Va., is a native of Nairobi, Kenya. He had lived in the United States for about a year before enlisting in the Air Force. A year later he was in Iraq. On one mission, his vehicle hit a roadside bomb that wounded him and the vehicle commander, and killed the gunner. Airman Chege returned fire on a suspected suicide bomber and eliminated further threat to the convoy. He was awarded a Purple Heart for his injury and an Army Commendation Medal for his actions.

**ACADEMY MARKS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** - Fifty years ago, 306 civilians reported to Lowry AFB, Colo., to become the first Air Force Academy cadets. Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon was recalled from retirement to become the academy's first superintendent. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Nathan F. Twining and Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott presided over the three-day program. Nearly 4,000 visitors were on hand for the opening celebration, which included speeches, a Thunderbirds aerial demonstration and the swearing in of the first class. The cadet wing was organized into four squadrons, and cadets began eight weeks of military and physical training. The academic year began following a weeklong encampment at nearby Buckley Field. Military academies have a long tradition of having upperclassmen train new cadets. But in 1955, there were no upperclassmen. To fill the temporary void, newly commissioned lieutenants from such schools as The Citadel and West Point, were recruited as air training officers (ATOs) to act as surrogate upperclassmen and provide leadership and guidance. "Things were such a jumble at that time, you hardly had time to think about anything," said retired Lt. Col. Jim Brown, class of 1959. "We were met at the gate by senior (noncommissioned officers), and all hell broke loose like it does now when (future cadets) get off the bus at Doolittle Hall. It was a bit of a shock. The ATOs got us in uniform, set up rooms, haircuts, got us ready to march for the ceremony. (They) did an outstanding job. It was hectic all day long. Lowry was only a temporary site until construction of the academy near Colorado Springs was opened in the fall of 1958. The class of 1962 was the last class to conduct summer training at Lowry before moving to the new site.

**NEVADA AIRFIELD NAMED CREECH AFB** - The Air Force renamed Nevada's Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Airfield Creech AFB in honor of Gen. W. L. (Bill) Creech. The airfield, originally built by the Army in the early 1940s to support the war effort, was renamed for the nearby community of Indian Springs, Nev. in 1964. The base is home to the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Battle Lab and is the training site for the Thunderbirds, the Air Force's premiere air demonstration squadron, of which Creech was a member in the late 50s. His 36-year career began as a private in the Army and ended as one of the most influential generals in Air Force history. He retired in 1984. General Creech advocated a philosophy of decentralized authority and responsibility, and shaped today's Air Force as commander of Tactical Air Command. Former Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. John Jumper said, "No single officer had greater influence on the Air Force in recent times than General Bill Creech. He transformed the way the Air Force conducts warfare. He understood the power of concepts such as jamming and electronic warfare, and he knew the future of being able to operate and dominate the sky at night. "When we (launched) Operation Desert Storm in 1991, it was our ability to own the night that quickly turned the tide in our favor," General Jumper said. General Creech died in 2003.



General Creech

**WAR-FIGHTING HEADQUARTERS IN PACAF** - A newly formed war-fighting headquarters at Hickam AFB, Hawaii focuses exclusively on planning and executing military operations throughout the Pacific theater, excluding the Korean Peninsula. It is named after Gen. George C. Kenney, a pioneer in aerial warfare strategy and tactics in the Pacific theater. "The General George C. Kenney Headquarters is a provisional full-service, operational-level headquarters," said Gen. Paul V. Hester, PACAF commander. "It serves as the premier joint forces air and space command and control organization with a standing 24/7 air operations center to serve both the PACAF commander and the commander United States Pacific Command." The new headquarters benefits from its proximity to Hickam's existing Pacific Air and Space Operations Center, which serves as the joint force air component commander's operational headquarters, extending from the California coast to the western borders of India and from Alaska down to Antarctica.



General Kenney

# BRAC REVAMPS MILITARY MEDICAL SYSTEM

Defense Department officials have used the Base Realignment and Closure process to transform the way military medicine operates. Medical facilities will become more joint, will consolidate where patients reside and will become state-of-the-art.

A major recommendation in the National Capital Area would establish Army's Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on the grounds of the Navy's Bethesda Naval Hospital. It also would build a 165-bed community hospital at nearby Fort Belvoir, Va. If approved, this would cost about \$1 billion, said Lt. Gen. (Dr.) George Peach Taylor, Air Force Surgeon General, who headed the cross-service group that worked on the medical BRAC recommendations. Army, Navy and Air Force medics would staff facilities. Besides housing the new Walter Reed, the Bethesda campus would keep the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. The National Institutes of Health is across the street from the Bethesda facility. The Malcolm Grow Hospital at Andrews AFB, Md., would close its in-patient facilities and become a large same-day surgery center. "We know these types of joint medical facilities work," Dr. Taylor said. "Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany has been staffed by Army and Air Force for more than 10 years. If you go to Balad hospital in Iraq, it is Army- and Air Force-run."

Changes would also take place in San Antonio, affecting Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston and the 59th Medical Wing's Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland AFB. Plans call for medical care to center at Brooke. It would become the San Antonio Regional Medical Center and would be a jointly staffed, 425-bed center. At Lackland, BRAC recommends building a world-class outpatient and ambulatory surgery center. The trauma center at Lackland would close, and Brooke would expand to handle the need. San Antonio also would become the hub for training enlisted medical technicians for all services. Currently, Army trains at Sam Houston, Air Force trains medics at Sheppard AFB, Tex., and sailors train at Great Lakes, Ill., San Diego, and Portsmouth, Va. "All enlisted specialty training would be done at Fort Sam Houston," Dr. Taylor said. Aerospace medicine research would move from Brooks City-Base (nee Brooks AFB) to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, along with the Navy's Aeromedical Research Lab from Pensacola, Fla. Recommendations would create six new centers of excellence for biomedical research. All are joint ventures. They are:

- The Joint Center of Excellence in Battlefield Health and Trauma at the Brooke Regional Medical Center.
- The Joint Center of Excellence in Infectious Disease Research at the Forest Glen Complex in Maryland.
- The Joint Center of Excellence for Aerospace Medicine Research at Wright-Patterson AFB.
- The Joint Center of Excellence in Regulated Medical Product Development and Acquisition at Fort Detrick, Md.
- The Joint Center of Excellence in Biomedical Defense Research at Fort Detrick.
- The Joint Center of Excellence in Chemical, Biological Defense Research, Development and Acquisition at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

**ONE-YEAR DEADLINE ON TRICARE CLAIMS** - Tricare beneficiaries who file their own claims should remember that, with few exceptions, claims must be filed within one year of the date of medical service or from the date of discharge from an inpatient facility. Beneficiaries also have one year from the date they receive medication to file for reimbursement of pharmacy claims. The one-year filing deadline also applies to those who file on behalf of individuals with other health insurance (OHI). The deadline applies to Tricare Standard beneficiaries as well as to Tricare Prime enrollees who obtain emergency or urgent care outside of the Tricare region in which they are enrolled. Tricare Prime and Extra providers are required to file claims on a beneficiary's behalf, and must also meet the one-year requirement. Tricare beneficiaries who use non-network pharmacies to obtain their prescription drugs pay full price at the pharmacy and then file a claim to obtain reimbursement. Beneficiaries may obtain a claim form (DD 2642) from a Tricare Service Center, Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator or Health Benefits Advisor at their military treatment facility. By law, OHI held by Tricare beneficiaries must be the first payer for covered benefits, including covered pharmacy services. Tricare pays first, however, when Tricare or when OHI coverage is exhausted covers prescriptions not covered by OHI. In either case, beneficiaries must obtain an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from the OHI indicating their OHI does not cover the medication or that the benefit limits of the OHI have been reached. Beneficiaries must submit a DD Form 2642 with the EOB, a copy of the itemized bill and, if a drug claim, a copy of the prescription to the appropriate Tricare contractor for reimbursement.

**THREE MEDICATIONS JOIN NON-FORMULARY LIST** - Tricare has placed three medications in its non-formulary category: Nexium® (esomeprazole), a medication for ulcers and other stomach problems, and Teveten® (eprosartan) and Teveten HCT® (eprosartan with hydrochlorothiazide), both used to treat high blood pressure. Military beneficiaries pay \$22 for up to a 30 or 90-day supply of these medications, depending on whether they fill the prescription at a Tricare Retail Network Pharmacy (TRRx) or through its Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP). Beneficiaries will pay the higher of \$22 or 20 percent in retail non-network pharmacies.

Officials noted that if medical necessity is established for using any of these medications, patients may qualify for the \$9 cost share for up to a 30-day TRRx supply or up to a 90-day TMOP supply. Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) no longer have Nexium®, Teveten® or Teveten HCT on their local formularies. MTFs will fill non-formulary requests for these medications only if an MTF provider writes the prescription and medical necessity is established. MTFs will consider Nexium®, Teveten® or Teveten HCT® prescriptions written by a non-MTF provider to whom the patient was referred, if a medical necessity is established. Active-duty members pay no cost shares, and unless medical necessity is established, they may not obtain non-formulary drugs.

**RESERVISTS EARN TRICARE ELIGIBILITY** - The Air Force Reserve Contact Center in Denver is the sole point of contact for Air Force reservists to enroll in Tricare Reserve Select. The Fiscal 2005 National Defense Authorization Act established Tricare Reserve Select for reservists who have served on active duty supporting a contingency since Sept. 11, 2001. The premium-based health care plan offers a bridge for reservists leaving active duty who are not covered by a civilian employer or other health insurance plans. The plan is available for reservists and their families. Monthly premiums are \$75 for the reservist and \$233 for the reservist and his or her family. Coverage is similar to Tricare Standard and comparable to the Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan for federal employees. For each active-duty service period of 90 consecutive days, a reservist earns one year of Tricare coverage if committed to serve in the Selected Reserve, which includes Air Force Reserve Command or individual mobilization augmentee programs, for the same period. Reservists must commit to serve by October 28 and be serving in the Selected Reserve before Tricare Reserve Select starts. The deadline applies only to those who have already mobilized for 90 consecutive days and have since demobilized. Coverage begins when the reservist agrees to serve in the Selected Reserve, the expiration of transitional Tricare benefits, or April 26, whichever is later. The decision to enroll in Tricare Reserve Select is a one-time choice, and the earliest effective date of coverage is April 26. Tricare coverage ends when the service agreement ends. It stops sooner if the reservist separates from the Selected Reserve, voluntarily withdraws from the program or fails to pay the monthly premiums. Mobilized reservists released from active duty after April 26 will be advised of their eligibility as part of their demobilization process.

# VA CHIEF OUTLINES EXPANDED BENEFITS, SERVICES

"One of the big opportunities we have, and it's a priority of ours, is to make sure that our service members coming out of the combat theater are well taken care of," said R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "That is one of our biggest opportunities." With more than 200,000 guardsmen and reservists deployed supporting operations in Southwest Asia, VA has expanded some benefits offered to this group, he added. "VA has a very extensive, new program for our reserve components," Nicholson said. "The reserve component person who ... is redeployed back is entitled to two years of full medical and dental care at any VA facility. If they have a service-connected disablement, that care will continue on beyond the two years." Education benefits also have been expanded for guardsmen and reservists. The amount of the benefit, however, depends on the time spent on active duty. Life insurance and home loan programs also have improved for guardsmen and reservists.

The Seamless Transition Program makes 158 medical centers and more than 850 clinics available for service members who separate from the military. A home loan program has 25 percent of the mortgage guaranteed by the VA, which allows most veterans to buy a home without down payment.

Benefits also include vocational and rehabilitation training for those injured physically or mentally. VA officials also are helping disabled veterans adapt to their environment, including the modification of a home or a vehicle if needed.

Congress has approved the increase in the death gratuity — a one-time payment to the family of a service member killed in action — from \$12,000 to \$100,000. The maximum life insurance benefit has increased from \$250,000 to \$400,000. A new catastrophic insurance program covers the service member up to \$100,000 above the other programs in the event of a catastrophic injury like the loss of eyesight or hearing. The premium is about \$1 a month.



James Nicholson

**\$14.7 MILLION GRANT FOR VIRGINIA VETERANS HOME** - Veterans in Virginia will have greater access to long-term health care, thanks to a \$14.7 million VA grant to build a state nursing home in Richmond. The grant will pay up to 65 percent of the cost to construct and equip a 160-bed state veterans home. Overall cost of the project is estimated at \$22.6 million. VA's State Home Program is a partnership with the states to acquire, construct or renovate nursing homes, domiciliaries and adult day health care facilities for veterans. The facilities qualify for per diem payments from VA; however, the states own and operate the homes. In fiscal year 2004, the VA spent more than \$1.7 billion in Virginia to serve 750,000 state veterans. VA operates major medical centers in Hampton, Richmond and Salem, with outpatient clinics and Vet Centers in many Virginia communities. For additional information regarding Virginia's veterans' homes, please call (540) 982-2860.

**SGLI EXPANDS BENEFITS** - Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance has expanded its benefits. Supplemental legislation signed into law in May increased maximum SGLI coverage to \$400,000 and provides payouts of up to \$100,000 for service members with traumatic injuries. The increased SGLI coverage was effective September 1 and the "traumatic SGLI" benefit starts December 1. Both benefits are retroactive to October 7, 2001. The benefit does not apply to service members suffering from disease. The increased benefits come with about a \$1 increase in premiums. Service members opting for maximum SGLI coverage — \$400,000 vs. the previous \$250,000 — will see monthly premiums increase from \$16.25 to \$26, based on the rate of 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance

coverage. SGLI coverage, previously available in \$10,000 increments, was increased to \$50,000. Those who retain \$250,000 or less coverage will see no increase in their premiums, except for the \$1 traumatic SGLI premium. Service members with dependents must get their spouse's approval to purchase less than the full amount of SGLI coverage. For those unmarried, notice will be provided to the designated beneficiary. VA continues to oversee and control the SGLI program. The law also raised retroactively to October 7, 2001, the lump-sum death gratuity, from \$12,400 to \$100,000 for those killed in a combat area or in combat training.

**NEW HOPE FOR SHINGLES SUFFERERS** - Relief from the painful symptoms of shingles is closer for millions of Americans, thanks to a pioneering study by researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In one of its largest medical studies, VA researchers found that an experimental vaccine cut the incidence of shingles in half and dramatically reduced its severity for other victims. Shingles is a painful nerve and skin infection that afflicts half of the people who live to age 85. It can last months, or even years. Victims develop painful blistering, and some may have permanent nerve damage. It afflicts about 1 million Americans each year. The study involved 38,000 volunteers, all aged at least 60. Half received a new vaccine, the other half a placebo.

**WOMEN SHARE VA HEALTH CARE** - Men and women receive similar VA outpatient care, according to a study published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine. The study looked at nine measures of quality care equally appropriate for women and men, including pneumonia and influenza vaccinations; colorectal cancer screenings; and eye examinations for diabetics, to determine what percentage of VA patients received appropriate care for their gender. Women veterans make up approximately 10 percent of VA's patient workload. This percentage is expected to grow in the years ahead as women make up more of the military.

**NEW PHARMACY SEARCH TOOL ON WEB** - Tricare has a new pharmacy Formulary Search Tool, allowing beneficiaries to find medication-specific information with either a drug name or a medical condition. The search tool can be accessed through the Tricare Pharmacy Web site. It checks availability of specific medications through Tricare Mail Order or Retail Pharmacy programs; lists medications on the Basic Core Formulary, available at full-service military pharmacies; finds copayment information for prescription medications; learns about generic equivalents for brand-name medications, quantity limits or prior authorization requirements and FDA approved drug uses, side effects and potential interactions with other medications. Beneficiaries should consult their provider, pharmacist, or other health care professional for specific questions regarding their medications. For more information on the Tricare Pharmacy Program and to access the Formulary Search Tool, visit the Tricare Pharmacy home page, [www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy). The search tool is accessible at [www.tricareformularysearch.org](http://www.tricareformularysearch.org).



# VOLUNTEERS FLY VETERANS TO WWII MEMORIAL

We're old, can't remember everything, and (are) about ready to die," said Alvin Ragland of Urbana, Ohio, who was able to see the World War II Memorial in Washington thanks to the "Honor Flight" program of the Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, aero club. Ragland was among World War II veterans and who were flown from to Manassas (Va.) Regional Airport and driven to the Washington Mall. Earl Morse, a VA physician assistant and retired Air Force captain, conceived Honor Flight. All of the pilots donated their time. Ragland said he'd seen pictures of the memorial, "but you can't believe it until you see it." Morse said the World War II veterans couldn't afford to pay for the trip. Therefore, he said, they would never see the memorial that honors their sacrifices. His father, Earl, 71, is a retired Air Force staff sergeant who served in Da Nang, Vietnam, from 1968 to 1969. Morse said the flights are financed by individual donations. "Probably the biggest donors are our pilots. They are paying for the aircraft rental fee, which ranges between \$400 and \$750 per day." "It's not tough to find a World War II veteran," said Morse, adding that there are about 160 signed up for the trips. "(Practically) any male over the age of 78 is a World War II veteran. But on a personal level, I've taken care of them for the past six years" as a physician assistant at a Veterans Affairs clinic in Springfield, Ohio. Morse said the last Honor Flight this year will take place in October, and the program will resume in April.



Photo by Rudi Williams  
**Col. (ret) Bob Manning,**  
**Frederick, Md., assists**  
**Elwood Lannon, 84.**

**ARLINGTON GAINS ADDITIONAL CEMETERY SPACE** - Arlington National Cemetery has added more than 70 acres of land to expand the sprawling 600-plus-acre hillside on the west bank of the Potomac River. In 1998, officials estimated they would run out of grave space after 2025, according to cemetery superintendent John Metzler Jr. "We developed a master plan to look at not only what we needed to do internally to maintain the cemetery, but also how we could look at expanding the cemetery beyond 2025." Officials searched around the cemetery to see who owned the land, what it was currently being used for, and the likelihood of being able to acquire the land. The search netted three parcels of land, including the neighboring 44-acre Navy Annex. "We also acquired a piece of National Park Service property inside the cemetery which was being used as a buffer zone between the Arlington House and the cemetery," Metzler said. Arlington House is where Gen. Robert E. Lee lived before the Civil War. The plantation mansion was confiscated at the outbreak of the Civil War and converted to headquarters for the Union's Army of the Potomac. The grounds were used as a burial site. Today, the mansion house is restored as a museum. The cemetery also will use a 17-acre tract of land at adjacent Fort Myer, Metzler noted. With these initiatives in place, Metzler said, Arlington would be able to continue operations until at least 2060, and that would include development for both ground and columbarium burials.

**DOD SHUNS SUPPORT FOR DRAFT** - Despite recruiting shortfalls for active-duty Army and all reserve components except the Air Force, the Defense Department has no interest in supporting a draft. The Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force all met recent recruiting goals, but the Army fell short by 25 percent. The Air Force Reserve continues to surpass its recruiting goals, while the other services all fell short.

Despite the pressures recruiters are up against - a strong economy, higher recruitment goals and lack of support by many parents and others who influence a recruitment decision, the military won't reduce standards to fill its ranks, said DoD spokesman Bill Carr. The Defense Department requires that 90 percent of recruits have high school diplomas and that at least 60 percent of them get higher-than-average scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. "There is zero chance that the department is going to a draft," Carr said. Today's weapon systems demand an environment in which experienced noncommissioned officers work hand in hand with junior members to develop their skills before advancing in the ranks, Carr said. And that's a dynamic the conscription system simply doesn't promote, he said. "We need more people beyond their first term of service, and we don't want 'shake and bake' sergeants holding control over lethal systems." Conscription is fatal to our performance," Carr said. "It's not a social thing. It's a performance thing."

**NEW MEDALS RECOGNIZE SOUTHWEST ASIA SERVICE** - New campaign medals recognize service members for their contributions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Defense Department announced the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and Iraq Campaign Medal for direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom between October 24, 2001, and a date to be determined in the future or Operation Iraqi Freedom between March 19, 2003, and some future date. The medals recognize service members who have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in these areas. Each military department will serve as the awarding authority. Air Force Personnel Center officials note that the criteria for the awards for Air Force members, including those who have since separated and retired, is not yet available. However, they should periodically check the AFPC web site, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/Awardsnet/decs.aspx?Mode=Text>, where information will be posted when available.

**JROTC INSTRUCTORS SOUGHT** - Air Force Junior ROTC has 60 instructor opportunities for retired officers and NCOs in high schools around the country. Applicants must be retired from active duty less than 5 years from the effective date of employment (may be waived in exceptional cases). Instructors must meet Air Force weight/body fat standards and have high standards of military bearing, appearance and moral character. Officers must have a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution. NCOs must have a high school diploma or equivalent (a minimum of an associate's degree will soon be required). Instructors wear the Air Force uniform and are expected to maintain appearance standards. In addition, they receive, at a minimum, a salary equal to the difference between their retirement pay and their active-duty pay and allowances. For more information, call JROTC 1-866-235-7682, ext. 35275 or 35300. For a list of schools and locations, go to <http://www.afjrota.af.mil/AFJROTC/Instructors.asp>.

**NEW CEMETERY OPEN** - Veterans and family members in western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia have the option of burial in the new National Cemetery of the Alleghenies. A five-acre section permitting about 3,700 burial spaces is open for burials even before the cemetery's construction is completed. A construction contract to develop 80 acres for approximately 19,000 burial sites will be awarded this fall. The 292-acre site is in Washington County, about 12 miles south of Pittsburgh. The cemetery is expected to serve veterans in 16 counties of western Pennsylvania and three in northern West Virginia. About 323,000 veterans live within 75 miles of the site. Burial space will include 15,000 gravesites, a columbarium to hold 3,000 cremation remains and 1,250 in-ground cremation burial sites. Veterans whose discharges are other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children may be buried in a national cemetery, regardless of where they live. No advance reservations are made. VA provides perpetual care, as well as a headstone or marker, a burial flag and a memorial certificate to survivors. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from a VA Web site at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

## RARE CHEVRONS ADDED TO MUSEUM AT DOVER AFB

Jeffery Hughes, a human resource assistant at McGuire AFB, N.J., donated a rare set of 1955 airman test stripes to the Air Mobility Command Museum at Dover AFB, Del. Hughes found the set while surfing an eBay military memorabilia section. The horizontal stripes were sold from an estate sale. Hughes paid less than \$20 for the stripes. "I wasn't sure how important they might be," he said. "I did know they were of some historic value." "These stripes may be the most collectible thing in all Air Force enlisted history," according to Gary Boyd, McGuire historian. The complete set of horizontal stripes was supposed to have been destroyed in 1956. "After evaluating Hughes' items, I discovered that he had a set of unissued E-2, E-3 and E-4 stripes. I found they were 1952-56 test stripes. The stripes revolved around the time the Air Force was creating its own traditions and uniforms after separating from the Army in 1947. "We began issuing blue uniforms as stocks of the Army Air Forces clothing was depleted, and began to use our own chevrons," Boyd said. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg approved new upturned chevrons in 1952, designating grades of airmen first, second and third class. A proposal to issue horizontal stripes was submitted to Gen. Nathan F. Twining in 1956, the new Air Force chief of staff. In a short memo, he said, "No change to be made in insignia." "Some folks in clothing issue squirreled away a few sets of the horizontal stripes, and they occasionally make their way onto the collector's market," Boyd said. Because of their historical value, Hughes said he thought it best to share his finding and donated them to the AMC museum.



Airman 3rd Class stripes



Airman 2nd Class stripes



Airman 1st Class stripes

**WASP MUSEUM OPENED** - Caro Bayley, one of a group of historic aviators — Women's Airforce Service Pilots — and 29 of her fellow pilots gathered at their old home, Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Tex., during the opening of the first National Women's Airforce Service Pilots World War II Museum. More than 70 years later, Ms. Bayley, National WASP Organization president, reflected on the history and heritage they created to the next generation of women pilots. During the early part of World War II, the United States had a shortage of male pilots. Jacqueline Cochran, America's premiere woman aviator, convinced Gen. Henry (Hap) Arnold to recruit young women pilots. They would be trained just like their male counterparts and would be able to replace the men needed for combat duty. More than 25,000 women applied, 1,830 were selected for the program and 1,074 graduated. "None of us knew what we were getting into back then," Ms. Bayley said. "I remember walking through a repair hangar at Patterson Field where they were working on some airplanes, and I thought how exciting it would be just to get a ride in one of those planes. I never ever thought I would ever be allowed to fly one of them." The women were stationed at more than 120 Army installations and flew more than 66 million miles in every type of U.S. military aircraft. They towed targets in live-fire, air-to-air gunnery practice and anti-aircraft artillery practice, then flight tested repaired aircraft, simulated strafing runs, flew weather missions and night tracking missions. They even flew missions to train navigators and bombardiers as well as put on B-26 Marauder and B-29 Superfortress demonstrations. In the service of their country, 38 WASP gave their lives. They received no military death benefits, nor military honors. No U.S. flags draped their caskets. Families bore expenses for bodies to be sent home for burials. The WASP organization was disbanded in 1944. The pilots received no separation benefits or military honors. It was not until 1977 that Congress granted them veteran status.



General Moseley

**NEW FACES IN TOP ECHELONS** - Effective dates were hard to come by at press time, but new faces dot the top ranks of Pentagon organization charts. Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers completed a four-year tour as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His former deputy, Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, succeeded him. His new deputy is Adm. Edmund Giambastiani. In the Air Force corridor, Gen. T. Michael Moseley is the new chief of staff, succeeding the retiring Gen. John P. Jumper. Replacing General Moseley as vice chief is Gen. John D. W. Corley. President Bush nominated Michael Wynne to be secretary of the Air Force. He has been the Defense Department's undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics. A West Point graduate, he was an Air Force captain on active duty. Pending

Senate confirmation of Wynne, the president designated Pete Geren acting secretary. James Roche resigned as secretary in January. The Senate confirmed Ronald M. Segas as undersecretary. The former astronaut is a graduate of the Air Force Academy.



General Corley

**AREA PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN NEWMAN AWARDS** - Eleven volunteer organizations shared in \$282,000 in grants to recognize exceptional programs designed to meet the needs of military communities and enhance the quality of life for military members and their families. The Newman's Own Award was developed to increase awareness of volunteer organizations throughout the Department of Defense that distinguish themselves through service in local military communities. This year, 177 organizations vied for grants — ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 — to 76 volunteer organizations. Top prize went to Operation Helping Hand in Tampa, Fla., which provides peace of mind for deployed service members who were seriously wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan. "Angels of Mercy," a program of American Legion Auxiliary Post 270, McLean, Va., received a \$2,500 grant. It supports wounded and injured Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom service members and their families. Auxiliary members visit patients weekly at Washington's Walter Reed Army Medical Center, bringing clothing and comfort items, providing home cooked meals and hosting special events. Also receiving a \$2,500 grant was "Kids Serve Too" a program in Reston, Va. It fosters awareness of challenges that military children endure. Awards are sponsored by Newman's Own, Inc., the Fisher House Foundation and the Military Times Media Group. "Newman" is actor Paul Newman, who sells a variety of products to support worthwhile causes.

**ARMED FORCES VACATIONS EXPAND RENTALS** - The Armed Forces Vacation Club, a vacation rental program offered to military personnel by Resort Condominiums International, has added nightly rental opportunities. Active duty and retired military personnel may rent a vacation condo either in seven-day increments or stay for one night or more. Resort properties are available in the United States and Canada. Overnight rates start as low as \$75 during peak season with peak period weekly rates as low as \$199. Overnight reservations must be made within 60 days of travel; weekly rentals up to 12 months in advance. Rentals include one bedroom and larger condos, studios and cottages. Many offer kitchen, washer and dryer, living room, dining area, swimming pool, fitness center and handicapped accessibility features. For overnight reservations call 1 888 338-0970. For weekly reservations call 1 800 724-9988 or go to [www.afvclub.com](http://www.afvclub.com). To make reservations, members need an AFVC installation identification number obtainable from base Moral, Welfare & Recreation offices.



## FORMER THUNDERBIRD ON SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

A former Thunderbird can't get enough of life on the road. Retired Col. Gary Younglove is on a nationwide motorcycle journey visiting each of the original F-4 Phantom Thunderbird aircraft. Michael Jacobssen, unofficial historian of the F-4 era, says nine F-4Es still exist. "My number on the team was nine. My mind started clicking. I could visit all nine aircraft and pay my respects.

As the Thunderbirds' administrative officer, he was able to ride in all of the aircraft during his tour 1970 to 1972. Colonel Younglove began his journey in Monett, Mo., where he reminisced with "Ole No. 3. Next stop was MacDill AFB, Fla. and Thunderbird No. 1. It flew the lead position for the Thunderbirds from 1969-73.

They used 11 aircraft during that period. Seven of them are on display in the United States. Two are at the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. The Phantom was the first multiservice aircraft, flying at the same time with the Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy. It is the only aircraft flown concurrently by the Thunderbirds and the Navy's Blue Angels. Colonel Younglove will travel about 7,200 miles, including stops at Athens, Tenn.; Atwater, Calif.; Battle Mountain, Nev.; and Vail, Ariz. He maintains a Web site dedicated to his journey at [www.gdyounglove.net/thunderbirdsondisplay/index.htm](http://www.gdyounglove.net/thunderbirdsondisplay/index.htm).

*"There I was in 1972," says Colonel Younglove.*



USAF Photo by SSgt. Randy Redman

*Colonel Younglove with "Thunderbird No. 1" at MacDill AFB Fla.*



Captain Malachowski

**THUNDERBIRDS ADD FEMALE PILOT** - New pilots for the 2006 Thunderbirds season include the first female demonstration pilot in the squadron's 52-year history. Capt. Nicole Malachowski becomes the first female demonstration pilot on any U.S. military high performance jet team. She moves to Nellis AFB, Nev., from RAF Lakenheath, England. Lt. Col. Kevin Robbins, from the Air Force Weapons School at Nellis AFB and Capt. Ed Casey, Luke AFB, Ariz., also joined the team. Returning demonstration pilots include Maj. Rusty Keen, Steve Horton and Brian Farrar. The U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron is an Air Combat Command unit comprising eight pilots, six of whom are demonstration pilots; four support officers; four civilians; and about 120 enlisted Airmen in more than 29 career specialties. A Thunderbirds' demonstration is a mix of six aircraft performing formation flying and solo routines. The four-aircraft diamond formation demonstrates the training and precision of Air Force pilots, while the solos highlight the maximum capabilities of the F-16 Fighting Falcon. The team's first performance was June 8, 1953. The Thunderbirds have flown for more than 310 million people at 3,944 air demonstrations in all 50 states and more than 60 foreign countries. The Thunderbirds annually headline the Joint Services Open House program in mid-May at Andrews AFB, Md., attracting more than 500,000 persons.

**MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EMPHASIZED** - The muffled roar of motorcycles filled the air at Andrews AFB, Md., during an Air Force Motorcycle Safety Forum. Main goals were to save lives by promoting safe riding. A five-year review of incidents revealed that 72 Airmen were killed in motorcycle accidents 1999-2003. "We have seen a significant decrease in the numbers of airmen killed in motorcycle accidents in the last year, but we need events like this forum to keep up the awareness of the need for motorcycle safety," according to SMSgt. John Thomas, traffic safety superintendent. Participating in the forum was Lt. Gen. Richard V. Reynolds, Air Force Materiel Command vice commander. He started riding in high school. "I started riding again about three years ago, and the first thing I did was take a basic rider course... it was some of the best training I've ever had. Increasing skills makes a rider safer, but it also makes riding more fun." The Motorcycle Safety Foundation, an internationally recognized nonprofit organization, provides nearly all training. Ray Ochs, MSF director of training systems, came from California to attend the safety forum and said the foundation "loves the Air Force's idea of mentorship."

**INCREASED CONCERNS OVER DIVORCE RATES** - Recognizing the stresses military life and multiple deployments put on families, DoD officials are stepping up efforts to help service members strengthen their family relationships and avoid divorce courts. A full range of outreach programs — from support groups for spouses of deployed troops to weekend retreats for military couples — aims to help military families endure the hardships that military life often imposes. Almost 50 percent of all first marriages end in divorce nationwide and the failure rate is even higher for second marriages: 60 to 70 percent. Divorce rates run even higher in specific occupations, particularly those that expose people to traumatic events and danger, as well as heavy responsibilities and public scrutiny. Police officers, for example, face divorce rates averaging between 66 and 75 percent. While the Air Force does not have service-wide marital support programs, officials said individual bases offer a wide variety of programs to support military families and help them through separations, deployments and the stresses relating to them. Programs are offered through family support, chaplain and mental-health counseling networks.

**PILOT RETURNED FROM LAOS FOR BURIAL** - Col. Gregg Hartness, of Dallas, missing in action from the Vietnam War, was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in September. Colonel Hartness and 1/Lt. Allen Shepherd III took off from Da Nang AB, on November 26, 1968, on a forward air control mission. Over Salavan Province in Laos, their O-2A Skymaster was apparently struck by enemy fire and began to spin out of control. Lieutenant Shepherd bailed out and was rescued by an Air Force search and rescue team about nine hours later. He did not see Colonel Hartness leave the aircraft. An airborne team located the aircraft's crash site near the rescue pickup point. The aircraft had been burning, but no contact with Colonel Hartness could be established. Enemy forces in the area precluded further rescue attempts, and electronic searches detected no signals from the lost aircraft or pilot. Between 1993 and 2003, joint U.S.-Lao investigators interviewed more than 60 witnesses in 39 different settlements in Laos before selecting a site for excavation. Earlier this year, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, with assistance from the Laos government, excavated a site in Salavan Province. They recovered human remains, aircraft wreckage, life support equipment and personal effects. Of the 88,000 Americans missing from all conflicts, 1,815 are from the Vietnam War, with 372 of those within the country of Laos. Another 756 Americans have been accounted for in Southeast Asia since the end of the Vietnam War. Of those, 197 are from losses in Laos.



## **RETIREE DAY PROGRAM**

**NOVEMBER 19**  
**THE CLUBS, BOLLING AFB**

### **MORNING**

7:00-9:15 Health screenings, Potomac South Room  
8:45 Posting Colors, National Anthem  
Introductory Remarks  
Col. (Ret.) John Moser, Director, Bolling RAO  
Col. Sheri Andino, CO, 11<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Gp.  
9:00 Legislative Update, Col. (Ret.) Mike Hayden  
Military Officers Association of America  
9:45 Tricare Under-65 Benefits  
Lt. Col. Chris Morgan, 11<sup>th</sup> Medical Group  
10:30 Space-A Travel  
Terminal Representatives, Andrews AFB  
10:40 Leisure Travel, Col. (Ret.) Godfrey Crowe  
Armed Services Vacations, MacNair Travel  
11:00 Where Do We Go From Here?  
Col. Duane Jones, Commander,  
Air Force District of Washington  
11:40 Lunch

### **AFTERNOON**

12:30 Keynote Address, Dr. James G. Roche,  
Former Secretary of the Air Force  
1:15 Identity Theft?  
SA Jim Long, Office of Special Investigations  
1:45 Closing Remarks - Colonel Moser  
8:00-9:30 Vehicle Registration, Front Lobby  
9:00-4:00 Special Sales, Bolling Exchange and Commissary  
2:00-4:00 Identification Card Renewals, Maisey Building